

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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July 28, 2003

Jasch Janowicz, Environmental Coordinator
City of Calabasas
26135 Mureau Road
Calabasas, California 91302

**Comments on Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration
for New Millennium Homes Trail System**

Dear Mr. Janowicz:

The Conservancy is pleased that the City and the developer of the former Baldwin Company project are moving forward with a comprehensive trails plan. Unfortunately almost all the proposed trail alignments on the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's 624-acre open space dedication are incongruous with either recently completed sections of trail or previous trail alignments discussed at the City-sponsored trails meetings over the last year. These discrepancies may partly be due to the scale of the mapping in the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration. The aerial provided makes it difficult to ascertain the specific terrain where some trail segments are proposed. We respectfully request a copy of the proposed trail system overlain on a USGS base map.

The entire north-facing slope of the 624-acre property is ecologically significant and contains core habitat values. Preservation of those values is the primary management objective of the Conservancy and the MRCA. Any trail through this area must skirt the outer boundaries of this north-facing habitat block. The trail alignments on the provided figure that violate this habitat block are portions of the Connector to Calabasas Road, Water Tank West to Gun Club Road, and the west end of Original Calabasas Connecting Trail.

All of these alignments are possible but require some modification. Unless they are modified they would result in substantial indirect habitat degradation impacts that are not addressed in the MND.

The map also misses the existing alignment of the Bark Park Trail on the 624-acre MRCA property. The already constructed trail is at a much higher elevation and contacts the existing Gun Club Road much further to the east.

Lastly, the trail behind the Mobil station by the 101 Freeway is shown as Existing Conservancy Trail. The bulk of that trail is on private property.

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We look forward to clarifying these issues with your staff. However, the MND as circulated does not adequately address our concerns. Please contact Paul Edelman at (310) 589-3200 ext. 128 to work out new options.

Sincerely,

JEROME C. DANIEL
Chairperson